

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 891
By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Tom Hodge of Johnson City, Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Tom Hodge; and

WHEREAS, Tom Hodge was an exemplary public servant and consummate journalist who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hodge illustrated a steadfast spirit of humanity and generosity throughout his life; even up to the moment of his unexpected passing, Tom Hodge was volunteering his time to benefit the Tri-Cities community and raise money for the Johnson City Kiwanis Club; and

WHEREAS, for 27 years, Tom Hodge served with acumen and alacrity as Editorial Director of the *Johnson City Press*, in which position he earned the respect of his peers and the reading public alike for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, born October 17, 1929, Tom Hodge was the son of the late Ernest Thomas and Maxine Moore Hodge of Johnson City; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hodge's illustrious tenure with the *Johnson City Press* dates back to 1948 when he became a part-time sports reporter at the age of 18; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of the University of Tennessee, Tom Hodge served as Editor of the *Orange and White* in 1951, a prestigious position that provided him with practical experience while he was earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism; and

WHEREAS, after graduation, Mr. Hodge became a full-time news reporter for the *Johnson City Press*; while in this position, he covered the paper's political beat from 1955-63, which included the Tennessee General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, Tom Hodge also served the *Johnson City Press* as Telegraph Editor and Executive Editor before being named Editorial Director in 1977; and

WHEREAS, his only absence from employment at the paper was during the Korean War when Mr. Hodge answered the call of duty and served his country for two years with the Army Counterintelligence Corps; and

WHEREAS, a widely known and respected journalist, Tom Hodge entertained readers for nearly 50 years with his beloved columns, "A Look Around" and "Here and There"; these daily features used understated humor to cover a range of topics, including little known or forgotten local history, seasonal updates on the progress of the mountain flora, tips about interesting rotations in the night sky, chronicles of his travels with his family, his many trips to New York and Europe with his wife Ann, and her Ann Hodge Dancers, his comedic appearances in the annual community productions, and off-the-wall news items "from all over"; and

WHEREAS, *Johnson City Press* Publisher Art Powers called Tom Hodge "an institution" and said that "To many, Tom was THE *Johnson City Press*" and noted that his parting "will leave a huge void at the newspaper and this community"; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his numerous years of service with the *Johnson City Press*, Tom Hodge served as an Associate Professor in the Department of Journalism at East Tennessee State University from 1968-86 and was a member of the Tennessee Press Association Board of Directors from 1969-71; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hodge was an extremely giving person who often reached out with compassion to people whom life had treated unkindly; he served on the directory boards of the Johnson City United Way, Salvation Army, Appalachian Fair, Kiwanis Club, and Mountain States Health Alliance, and he generously undertook leadership roles in these organizations, including meritorious service as Treasurer of the United Way from 1998 onward, chairman of the MSHA Board from 1994-2000, President of Kiwanis Club in 1975, and Chairman of the MSHA's Washington County Community Board from 2000 onward; and

WHEREAS, loved and respected by his fellow citizens, Mr. Hodge had been often recognized for his stalwart commitment to public service; his many accolades and awards include recognition as 1987 Kiwanian of the Year; the 1991 JC Penney Gold Rule Award for

Community Service; inclusion in *Who's Who in the South and Southeast* for 1994; the Washington County Historical Association's Samuel Cole Williams Award for distinguished service; and nomination for East Tennessee's Historic Society's Ramsey Award for Lifetime Achievement; and

WHEREAS, Tom Hodge was a devout member of the First United Methodist Church, where he was an inspiration to many; and

WHEREAS, Tom Hodge was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Tom Hodge enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, Ann Hodge, and was the proud parent of three sons, Kelly Hodge, Kevin Hodge, and Kendall Hodge, and one daughter, Kristy Hodge Pratt; Mr. Hodge was also the devoted grandfather of eight: Alexis Hodge, Patrick Hodge, Victoria Hodge, Katelyn Hodge, Dylan Pratt, Kody Pratt, Madeline Hodge, and Andrea Hodge; and

WHEREAS, Tom Hodge leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant, gifted journalist and writer, and great friend to the Johnson City community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Tom Hodge, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character, both as a journalist and a human being, and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Tom Hodge.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.